



Memorandum

TO: City Council

FROM: Mayor Ron Gonzales
Councilmember Forrest
Williams

SUBJECT: Coyote Valley Urban Reserve
Triggers for Developing Specific Plan

DATE: November 20, 2001

Approved

Ron Gonzales Forrest Williams

Date

11/20/01

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the City Council support staff's recommendation to implement the direction approved by the Council on June 26, 2001, to amend the General Plan text to modify the purpose of the Urban Reserve triggers applicable to Coyote Valley.

BACKGROUND

The City Council made smart-growth decisions for Coyote Valley two decades ago to achieve balanced development that would be good for the residents of San Jose. The General Plan designated North Coyote for industrial development for stable economic base and jobs; Central Coyote for residential development after jobs were in place; and South Coyote for a greenbelt separating San Jose from Morgan Hill to ensure open space, not urban sprawl, between our cities.

Council also established "triggers" to ensure that industrial development preceded housing development, so that our community would have the financial resources to support quality public services for our residents. These remain sound planning principles today. Balancing jobs and housing while preserving open space is critical as we move forward in Coyote Valley.

On June 26, 2001, the Council unanimously initiated a General Plan text amendment to modify the purpose of Urban Reserve triggers applicable to Coyote Valley as part of an overall long-term approach to create housing and affordable housing. This amendment was a result of the Housing Production Team's Recommendations #8 and 9 that the Council accepted in January this year. This change simply streamlines the planning process and allows the preparation for the Specific Plan for the Coyote Valley Urban Reserve; it does not effect the actual triggers themselves, the sequence of development, or Council's ability to take action on the elements of the Specific Plan.

When the Council gave this direction in June, it stipulated that the Specific Plan Task Force shall be directed to include a requirement in the Specific Plan that would mandate 20 percent of all units be "deed-restricted, below-market-rate units." That is a clear direction to the task force that identifies an essential outcome for the great new neighborhoods that will come to Coyote Valley. It is an example of the kind of desired outcomes and specific planning parameters that Council should give to the task force to provide it with clear and focused direction at the time we establish it.

To this end, we will work to develop a recommendation for outcomes and parameters to bring forward to Council when the time comes to request authorization to initiate a Specific Plan. We will base these recommendations on input from Council, city staff, and community stakeholders. We strongly encourage any councilmember with thoughts on this issue to please forward them to Joe Guerra in the Mayor's Office or Heather Cook in Councilmember Williams's office.

Allowing this planning process to begin sooner will give us the time in advance to develop excellent urban design with full public participation. We want these new neighborhoods to set a new standard for livability. This time allowed for planning is especially valuable while there is a downturn in the economy so that we are not forced to make hasty decisions when the economy turns around and the existing triggers are met in the future.

CONCLUSION

Approval of this General Plan text amendment will provide the City the opportunity and flexibility to plan the future of Central Coyote Valley without the tremendous pressures for construction that would occur if the triggers were satisfied before any planning could be done. Such pressures could be detrimental to the thoughtful planning and full public participation needed for world-class neighborhoods that are transit- and pedestrian-oriented. Coyote Valley is the largest and last-remaining portion of San Jose that remains to be developed. It is the best opportunity for San Jose to again demonstrate its leadership for using the principles of smart growth to achieve a high standard of livability for urban residents.